

Training to focus on assisting vulnerable populations

Anyone can be a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking. The journey to break free from an abusive cycle and heal from trauma is often riddled with challenges.

For survivors from diverse and underserved populations, those challenges can be magnified. This is especially true if service providers fail to understand and address their unique needs.

In an effort to help advocates identify and protect vulnerable populations who experience abuse, Community Legal Aid hosts Break the Silence, an annual one-day conference that supports the professional development of service providers, law enforcement, attorneys, and other advocates who work with survivors of violence.

“As service providers, we recognize there is no ‘one-size-fits-all’ solution to the challenges facing survivors,” explained Jeanne Charles, managing attorney for Legal Aid’s Legal Assistance to Victims Project. “Learning about the different circumstances and lived experiences of survivors from diverse backgrounds provides advocates with targeted information and support to help survivors determine their best course of action in a situation.”

Working with immigrant and refugee survivors is a key focus for this year’s conference. Charles pointed out that there is a significant presence of immigrants and refugees in and around Legal Aid’s service area. Ohio ranks eighth in the nation for the number of refugees it’s taken in over the past 10 years.

“Survivors who are immigrants and refugees face cultural and language barriers that can limit their ability to receive supportive services,” shared Charles.

“Plus there are special legal considerations that must be taken into account when working with such survivors,” she added.

Other conference topics include:

- Trauma bonding: the dynamics that bond victims to abusers
- Human trafficking and race: How racism and system oppression increase vulnerability to exploitation
- The impact of intimate partner violence and children, and
- Sexually oriented offense protection orders

This year's conference will take place on Thursday, March 31st from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Participants will have the option of attending online or in-person at the Kent State University Hotel and Conference Center, 215 S. Depeyster St. in Kent, Ohio. Those interested in learning more about the conference can find detailed information at www.communitylegalaid.org/breakthesilence.

Sidebar:

Break the Silence: Identifying and Protecting Vulnerable Populations

Thursday, March 31, 2022

9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (check in opens at 8:45 a.m.)

Kent State University Hotel and Conference Center

215 S. Depeyster Street, Kent, OH 44242

Cost: \$25 in-person (lunch provided) or free online

Continuing education credits have been requested

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